



## **A Journey Towards Superhuman: In the Light of Kazi Nazrul and Immanuel Kant**

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### **Abstract**

*Human beings want to be good. But do we want to keep everyone good? Nature has kept us well because of its uniformity principle rather than putting us in danger. But human beings have kept others' hazards because of the contrast between their face and mask; they have also become entangled in the tangled web of masks. All the problems are because of the contrast between how people should behave and how people behave. One of the famous Bengali rebel poets, Kazi Nazrul Islam, understood the problem and wrote to show the direction of light in his literature, and German revolutionary thinker Immanuel Kant also felt the problem and wrote in detail in his Philosophical Discussion. The Western philosopher Immanuel Kant felt what the true moral principle of man should be, and he showed that the righteous are moral. That is, he declared a revolution against true religion and hypocrisy in the name of religion through his writings. Similarly, the famous Bengali poet Nazrul Islam also realized that the root of man's real subjugation lies in his own petty, immediate desires, animal instincts, etc. Only if they can suppress them will they become truly free. Everyone is subordinate to himself, to his own immediate desires, animal instincts, etc. Human beings must first abandon their own petty interests; only then can they overcome all obstacles. They can become a real man. Only then will overall development be possible. I have tried to show in this article how we are subordinate to ourselves. That is, only if we can suppress our own animal instincts can we conquer everything. In this article, I will try to analyze how Western and Eastern philosophers, Immanuel Kant and poet Nazrul, have presented their methods and principles for overcoming our own petty, immediate desires, animal instincts, etc., and becoming a true man.*

**Keywords:** Human Being, Animality, Rationality, Morality, Society

### **Introduction:**

There is no doubt that human beings are very diverse creatures. They became one of the strongest beings in the world with the power of their unique intelligence. They were the first to know the proper use of fire, bringing about a radical change in the dynamics of the world. They became the best creature in creation. But another entity has faced them with various challenges. That is animality. That is why man is called a rational animal. One of the greatest Indian poets and Philosopher Kazi Nazrul Islam, has put forth this great humanism that we have to suppress such animality. Since every human being is born with these two entities, rationality and animality, it is not possible for a human being to be without intelligence or animality. But their animality must be driven by intelligence. Only

then can they be the best creature in creation; they can become a unique creation. Humans can become superhuman. Only then can a very beautiful society be formed. All kinds of differences and discrimination can be eliminated. And if any religion prevails there, it will only be the religion of humanity. There, people will learn from watching others how much it is possible to suppress their animal nature, and how it can be suppressed. Only then will people be able to become worshipers of truth, worshipers of goodness, unique creatures with moral responsibilities. Otherwise, people can sometimes be worse than wild animals. They can be brutal; all the bad qualities in them can prevail. People can become more violent than wild animals. There, untruth, evil, and immorality can prevail. There, various petty self-interest, religious differences, caste, colour hatred, gender differences, etc., can prevail. In this article, I will try to show how and why Kazi Nazrul Islam, in his rebellious style of writing, says to worship the religion of man. This article will also attempt to briefly outline how the German philosopher Immanuel Kant attempted to establish such a tone in his theory of morality.

## **Discussion:**

### **Overcoming all Kinds of Differences**

Kazi Nazrul Islam, a worshipper of human religion, was always above all kinds of differences. That is why he could say that a Hindu and a Muslim are two flowers on one stalk. In fact, the goal of all human beings is the same: liberation. Liberation from the various bounds of the world. We clearly see in Thakur Shri Ramakrishna that as many opinions as there are paths. That is, "our paths may be different, but the goal is the same" (*tattvamasi-chāndyōgya upaniṣada-6.8.7*), that is, "you are that" (*aham brahmāsmi-br̥hadāranyaka upaniṣada-1.4.10*). That is, above all differences, we must realize that there is no difference between you and me. Various worldly distinctions have been made. But only if we can rise above all differences can human life be meaningful. Otherwise, the world is a burden. Kazi Nazrul has spoken of sacrificing our animalities in his *Śahīdi īda* poem (Nazrul, 1924). That sacrifice will be the ultimate sacrifice in which we will be able to say that we do not spend our lives for immediate personal interests, do not give up life for petty interests, and accept everyone as one human being and live for all, then only will we live the best life. We are all for all; each of us is for the others.

### **Renunciation and Freedom:**

Kazi Nazrul also says that not pleasure, but renunciation. The pursuit of renunciation is the ultimate pursuit. He who lives only for his own pleasure must become a human being through the pursuit of renunciation. He must kill the animal nature within himself and share his happiness with everyone. And the biggest thing is that there can be no limit to enjoyment. Only enjoyment makes a person more restless, more dissatisfied. As a result, he starts deviating from his human nature. In fact, dissatisfaction with enjoyment only increases desire, while renunciation is the ultimate pursuit. Only those who have been able to slaughter the animal nature of the mind can devote themselves to the pursuit of renunciation. That is, they have been able to direct their own animal instincts with intelligence. Where there is a desire for enjoyment, there is bound to be unrest. It may be in the social field, it may be in the religious field, it may be in the economic field, it may be in the political field, etc. In fact, the aim of all such policies is noble. But various contradictions are observed in the person who follows such policies.

In many cases, the misuse of such policies can be observed due to the lack of real education and the lack of educational character. In this case, it is possible to stop such differences by giving real education. The education that exists in a dormant state in every human being. It can be developed only if we can provide a suitable environment. That is why Swami Vivekananda says that, "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man" (Vivekananda, 1958).

### **Overcoming Only Personal Interest:**

In the *Śahīdī īda* poem (Nazrul, 1924), Kazi Nazrul Islam has spoken about achieving liberation by sacrificing our personal interests. The taste of this freedom is unique. That is, we become subordinate to the sensual instinct. But if we can suppress the sensual instinct or if we can direct it through the intellect, then we will find the taste of real freedom. Then we will be able to understand what we should do or what action should be taken in which situation.

We see the idea of such freedom in the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant in Western philosophy. There we see the dual nature of the soul (Smith, 1929). One is the independent being, and the other is the dependent being. In various actions in the physical world, we must depend on the situation at every moment. That is, which is our dependent being. But we know or understand what we should do (morality) at this moment. In that respect, we are free in terms of morality or moral sense. For example, let us say a person must reach the office by 10:30 am. That is his obligation. And on his way to the office, while sitting in a car, he notices that a gentleman suddenly falls on the side of the road due to an accident and cries for help. So, what should that office worker does in such a situation? Should he not reach the office by 10:30 am, or should he devote himself to the care of the accident victim? This same person facing two conflicts is the dual nature of a person. On the one hand, he must go to the office at a specific time. On the other hand, he is also able to think about what he should do in such a situation. That is, he can think that in such a situation, he should help the accident victim.

This form of the soul is free in nature. If it were not so, we would not have realized that we should help such an accident victim now by following the dictates of our consciousness. That means our freedom of choice or morality comes from the free nature of the soul. And if we can control our animality, that means we can control it with intelligence; only then will we realize true freedom. That is, we are not subordinate to others but to ourselves, subordinate to our own sensual instincts. We cannot control the animal instincts of the mind; that is why we are subordinate. Before we are subordinate to others, the independent being or moral being becomes subordinate to our own animal nature. In this situation, the great poet says that "if we can control such animal instincts, then only will we realize true freedom" (Nazrul, 1924).

And we find the way to gain such freedom thoroughly in the ethics of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. Where he clearly says that,

"Act only in accordance with that maxim through which

you at the same time can will that it become a universal law" (Kagan, 2002).

That means, act according to a personal principle that also qualifies as a universal principle. And there will be no conflict between such universal principles. For example, can breaking a promise be a universal moral principle? The answer is no. Suppose a person

borrow money from someone for his financial needs, promising to repay it. But he knows in his mind that he will not keep that promise, which means he will not repay the borrowed money. Then, in such a case, the personal principle of that person for such an action is, whenever I (that person) need money, I will borrow money with the promise that I will repay it, but I (that person) know in my mind that I will not repay the borrowed money. Then the personal principle of that person is not correct; how can it be a universal principle? Because in this case, if a person promises to return the money, if we take such a situation as 'P' and if we take the situation of not keeping the promise as '~P', then such a situation arises that  $P \sim P$ . That is "logically contradictory" (Copi, Cohen, McMahon 2014). And the biggest thing is that a promise means keeping the promise. But breaking the promise means not keeping the promise. Which is a contradictory idea. Moreover, if a promise is not kept, then the promise has no meaning. Because a promise means keeping the promise.

But when that promise is broken, then the promise has no meaning. And if such a policy is made a universal law, then its form will be such that whenever a person feels the need for money will borrow with a promise that he will return the money. But everyone will know in their mind that none of them will return. Then can such a law ever be universal? The answer will be no. Because there it will take on a self-contradictory form like the above situation, and the word promise will become meaningless there.

### **Freedom of Human Action:**

If we want to find freedom in our actions, we will have to act according to such a personal principle that at the same time qualifies as a universal principle. For example, one should always tell the truth, or one should always help a person in need. Such a principle can be universal as well as a personal principle. Because if a person always speaks the truth, then a good environment is created, as there is no question of cheating anyone. But on the other hand, if a person sometimes speaks the truth and sometimes lies, then there is no dignity of truth, and an unacceptable situation arises. Because when someone lies, he is deceiving someone, and he himself is creating an environment of being deceived. As a result, all kinds of chaotic situations arise. And such a policy can never be universal. Because if every person keeps lying in a particular situation, then the truth has no value. Moreover, if everyone keeps lying in a particular situation, then everyone can be deceived by everyone. Therefore, it can never be a universal principle. Freedom of human action can be challenged due to inhuman acts of the state authority (Nandy, 2022).

But in formulating such a policy, various problems can arise. For example, suppose a boy is resting in an outer room, and his parents are resting in the inner room. In such a situation, a group of robbers comes to him and asks him whether his father is in the inner room. Then what will the boy answer? If he remains silent, then it is also a kind of lying. Because he deliberately remains silent despite knowing everything. Which is a kind of lying or resorting to deception. On the other hand, if he says that he does not know where his father is, then it is also a kind of lying. Again, if he says that his father is not at home, then it is a direct lie. So, the question is, will he protect the truth or save his father's life? In that case, if we are to answer according to Kant's theory of morality, we have to say that the universal policy is acceptable. In this case, it may be good to lie to save the life of the child's father or to save his father's life from the hands of robbers, but it is not a moral act. He clearly states that "if a person's personal policy is motivated by goodwill and is

universal without self-contradiction, and even if its result is bad, it will be considered a moral action" (Kagan, 2002). But if an action is not motivated by goodwill and if such an action does not qualify as a universal principle, then even if its result is good, it cannot be a moral action. It may be praised in a particular situation, or it may be partially good in some cases. As a result, such an action may be good but not a moral action. In fact, in such special cases, our personal immediate desires appear to be greater than the overall interest. That is why, in some cases, it may seem that lying becomes more useful than the truth. In fact, in such cases, our emotions suppress our intellect. But Kant said exactly the opposite.

Again, the exact opposite situation can also occur. For example, let us say a doctor voluntarily performed an operation to save the life of a patient, and somehow that operation was not successful. Then, can the doctor's action be called immoral in view of such a result? In Kant's view, the answer would be no. The doctor's action would be considered a moral action.

In fact, he was in favour of doing "duty for the sake of duty" (Kagan, 2002). He suggested duty for the sake of duty, not in terms of the result. If an action is carried out by reason and a personal principle is done voluntarily in the form of duty for duty, and at the same time it applies to everyone without any self-contradiction, then it can be called a moral action. In this context, he made a distinction between actions done according to law and doing duty for the sake of duty. For example, when we do any duty in an office, we must follow the rules of that office. That is, we must perform our duty according to the principles imposed by the authorities of that office. In many cases, the result of such an action may be good, or in most cases, the result or goal of such an action is good. But even then, such an action cannot be called a moral action. Because that action will be moral if the person acts according to his own principles (which should also be universal without any self-contradiction) and obviously motivated by goodwill. That means the individual must have freedom in moral principles. And there will be no desire for results. Whatever the result of the said action is, if it is motivated by goodwill and is not only personal principles but also universal, it will be considered a moral action.

### **Control of Animality to Become Super Human:**

A similarity between Kazi Nazrul Islam's ethical viewpoint and the ethics of the Western philosopher Immanuel Kant is that if we control our animal nature of mind, then we will overcome all kinds of obstacles. That means, if we can suppress our brutality, eliminate the jealousy and hatred within us, then we will find an unquenchable joy. Then the success of others will not hurt me, but will give me immense joy. We will realize that he or she will also be very good. This effort by everyone to be good has repeatedly made a humanist poet think. He is talking about eliminating the brutality within us. As a result, it is possible to get an overall (social, economic, political, religious, etc.) healthy environment. And if we can suppress such brutality, then not only different animals but the entire society will be saved from our violent attitude. That is, he wanted to say that all differences, discrimination, and conflicts do not come from any external cause but from the brutal attitude of man. Therefore, only if we can eliminate it can all differences, discrimination, and conflicts be eliminated. On the other hand, in Kant's ethics, we see that our life should be guided by reason. And if that is possible, then the realization of the true nature of man is also possible. Then man will be able to become truly moral. If the man is not moral, then corruption comes (Nandy, 2023).

**Conclusion:**

However, the context of such philosophical thoughts of Kazi Nazrul was mainly social, political, and religious aspects. Because at the time he was writing, India was undivided Bengal, and was under the brutal rule of the British. In that context, he was fighting, directly and indirectly, for the independence of the motherland. And he was trying to highlight this thought through his writings that our immediate inclinations are the ultimate cause of our subjugation. Because we are subject to others for the fulfilment of our own petty interests, for the enjoyment of immediate pleasures, for the immediate fulfilment of our desires, etc. It seems that everyone will realize at some point in their lives that misrule, evil power, exists not only because of the unjust power of the ruler but also because of the dishonest use of spies among the ruled. Otherwise, it would never have been possible to rule India for an extended period by external force. He basically talked about the awakening of the power of man, the awakening of goodwill, the elimination of our own brutish instincts, the rise above our own immediate desires, and the interests of the collective. Just as he talked about the awakening of political good power, he also blames that brutish instinct as the ultimate root of all social differences. If we can guide our lives with intelligence, then we will see that there are no such things as social distinctions; all are the same human beings, and there cannot be any other higher or lower beings. These are basically manifestations of the evil power of some people. In fact, they are not human even after becoming human. The poet has called them to become real humans. That is possible only through the awakening of the good energy, the good attitude within themselves.

Again, if we look deeply, the root of all economic inequality is that brutish instinct. The inequality between the rich and the poor and the egoism arising from such economic inequality are also at the root of that animal nature of man. Therefore, if we can eliminate our brutish instincts, if we can put aside our petty desires and awaken the unifying power among ourselves, then only will all inequality be eliminated. The root of gender inequality is also selfishness. If we can eliminate our evil energy, then the difference between men and women will also be eliminated, and a very beautiful society will be developed. In addition, the root of all religious differences is partial knowledge or partial knowledge of all religions. The main reason for such differences is our animal nature, the desire to fulfil our personal petty interests. No religion can be developed to create differences in people or to harm someone. It cannot be developed to look down on people of other religions. In fact, such division comes because of the bad self-interest, the brutish instincts of some people. Such division and conflict can be eliminated only through proper education of people, through the awakening of consciousness.

The main context of Immanuel Kant's ethics was also the so-called religious principle. According to him, a truly moral person is a truly religious person. But in that time, religion was used as a weapon to satisfy some selfish people's petty interests, immediate desires. But the truly religious person is the moral one. In this context, I would like to conclude with a special note on Soren Aabye Kierkegaard that,

"It is easier to become a Christian if I am not a Christian than to become a Christian when I am one" (Hannay, 2009).

That means, it is easily possible to make a person a true Christian who has no prior knowledge or dogmatism about the Christian religion. But it is very difficult to make a person a true Christian who has some prior knowledge or dogmatism about Christianity.

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